

BUILD SKILLS

An Hymn to the Evening • To His Excellency, General Washington

LITERARY ANALYSIS

Personification is a figure of speech that gives human qualities to something that is not human. For example, notice the way Phillis Wheatley describes the ocean in these lines:

*Enwrapp'd in tempest and a night of storms;
Astonish'd ocean feels the wild uproar . . .*

The poet personifies the sea by giving it human emotions. In both poems, notice how Wheatley uses personification to describe her subjects in human terms.

READING STRATEGY

When reading poetry, you may need to **clarify the meaning** of passages that at first seem unclear. In these poems, Wheatley often reverses the usual order of sentences by placing a verb before its subject. Clarify meaning by rephrasing unusual word order and checking the definitions of unfamiliar words. Use this chart to aid your understanding.

Original Sentence

↓

Define Words

↓

Reordered and Clarified Sentence